



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 167

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021

No. 18

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are the light that keeps us safe. Your protections soothe doubts and calm fears. You hear our prayers, and Your answers are swift.

Lord, teach our lawmakers to follow Your guidance. Place their feet on the right paths. Guide them with Your precepts and encourage them with Your promises. May their faith in You keep them courageous and true.

Lord, we praise You for You are the rock of our salvation.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, as you know, as you walk around the Capitol these last couple of weeks, you have to notice the changes. Quiet views of the Capitol, the seat of our government, are obstructed by fences topped with barbed wire and servicemembers on patrol at every corner, every entrance, and every gateway. These servicemembers, men and women of our

National Guard, are our neighbors. They are our coworkers. They are members of our family. They are called away from home, many of which volunteered to come here to the Nation's Capitol to protect the very heart of democracy. They deserve our thanks. They deserve our gratitude. They deserve our unwavering support.

With over 25,000 members of the Guard from every State, territory, and District of Columbia present in Washington to protect our time-honored traditions, there is no greater representation of the best of America here as we carry out the people's business. I am grateful to them for their service.

Now, 2 weeks ago, I had the pleasure of visiting and thanking some members of Vermont's own National Guard—Lieutenant Colonel Day, along with Captain Lahr, and First Sergeant Stewart from Bravo Troop of Vermont's renowned Mountain Calvary Battalion. They welcomed me and introduced me to a contingent of the Vermonters present.

Now, through their deployment, they are asked to face challenges at a moment's notice. They use the training and the teamwork that has always helped them succeed in Vermont and overseas. They met those challenges, and they exceeded those challenges.

Like all National Guard units when they deploy, these Vermonters came to the District with deep ties back to our communities and the families and employers that make their service possible.

I am privileged to be the cochair of the Senate National Guard Caucus. I have heard, time and again, firsthand testimony from members of the Guard that that hometown connection is the glue that makes what they do possible. We are grateful to their families, their communities, and their employers too. But that can be said about every Senator here, including our distinguished Presiding Officer.

The Vermont Guard members I talked to carried with them the sup-

port of Vermont communities, especially from Southern Vermont, where Bravo Troop's armory is located. To give you an idea of how they are part of the community, the deployment was led by the vice principal of Brattleboro Union High School. It included the cousin of one of my staffers. It was filled with soldiers with connections and stories that make up the culture and community I proudly call home—Vermont. A similar story could be told about the communities represented in the units from every State and territory. I am especially grateful because most of the soldiers from Vermont are going to deploy overseas later this year. Everyone that came down this January volunteered to be here.

So much has been asked of the National Guard these last 3 months, from the COVID-19 response to several disturbances this summer, to safeguarding the Nation's Capitol—all of it on top of regular training and deployment schedules.

To the men and women of the National Guard from every State and territory and the District of Columbia, we appreciate the immense contributions you have made to our country today and every day. You are real patriots. You are real heroes, and democracy thanks you.

PROTESTS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, on another matter to bring to our leaders, you know, I first came to this Capitol when I was a teenager with my parents. We came down from Vermont. I remember looking around and walking through it, thinking what a privilege it was just to walk here. And then, during my years at Georgetown Law School, I would come here often just to see it, just to watch it, and to walk up the Mall and look at the Capitol and say: That is democracy.

I never thought I would work here, but I have now for a number of years.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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